642 a Provisional Government with M. Ulmanis as Prime Minister and
646 M. Meierovics as Foreign Minister, pending the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

642 In Lithuania, M. Sleževičius became Prime Minister in the Cabinet formed in November 1918 by M. Voldemaras, when the latter left to attend the Peace Conference in Paris. A provisional National Assembly, the 200 members of which were chosen by mass meetings all over the country, met in Kaunas (Kovno)[1] from January 17 to 23, 1919, to draft a republican constitution and to re-elect and expand the *Taryba*; M. Smetona was elected President of the State on April 4.

728 Before the constitutions could be drafted, however, the new
648 Provisional Governments had to concentrate their whole energies on the military situation brought about by the Armistice of November 1918. The Armistice Convention had provided that the German troops were to evacuate all territories which were formerly a part of the Russian Empire 'as soon as the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the interior conditions of those territories' (Article 12), and were to 'cease at once all requisitions, seizures, or coercive measures for obtaining supplies intended for Germany in . . . Russia' (Article 14). It was the intention of the Allies that the German forces should do their utmost to stem the Bolshevik advance, and that, when their services were no longer needed, they should withdraw from the Baltic Provinces without reaping any political reward for their efforts. This was clearly too much to expect, and the Germans, by withdrawing rapidly and without permission in November 1918, and by removing all supplies of arms, food, and even rolling-stock as they went, in violation of Article 14, not only facilitated the Bolshevik invasion, but did their best to put the new Baltic Governments in the position of having to turn to them for assistance.

648 At the end of November the Red Armies had begun to penetrate
721 into Estonia from Narva and the Finnish coast; on January 5, 1919, they were in Vilna, and the Lithuanian Government had retired to Kaunas, while the Latvian Government had been driven from Riga to take refuge at Liepāja (Libau). By the end of February the Bolsheviks had overrun Latvia and a large part of Lithuania.

●[723] In Estonia, General Laidoner and Captain Pitka organized an army and marine force from the remnants of the Estonian regiments of 1917, and—with the aid of Finnish loans and volunteers, gifts of ammunition and foodstuffs from Great Britain, and the occasional presence of British warships in Tallinn (Reval) and Liepāja under Admiral Sinclair—put up a heroic resistance, and by the beginning of February 1919 had temporarily cleared the country.

[1] Vilna was then occupied by the Bolsheviks.